

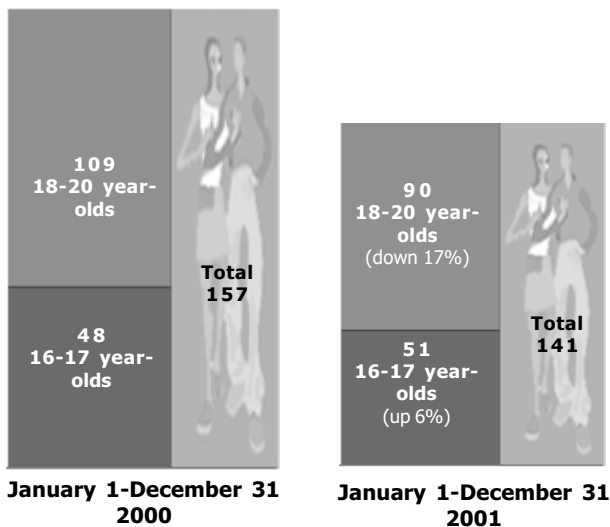
## - Young Driver Highway Safety Facts -

### Crash Facts

When compared proportionally to other age groups, 16 to 20 year-olds historically have the highest percentage of traffic deaths on our nation's highways. And, unfortunately, the traffic fatality rate for Virginia's 16 and 17 year-olds increased in 2001. Between January 1 and December 31, 2001, 51 individuals in the 16 and 17 year-old age group died on Virginia's roads, up six percent compared to the same period in 2000.

Virginia fatalities in the 18 to 20 year-old age group, however, decreased. Between January 1 and December 31, 2001, 90 individuals in the 18 to 20 year-old age group died on Virginia's roads, down 17 percent compared with the same period in 2000.

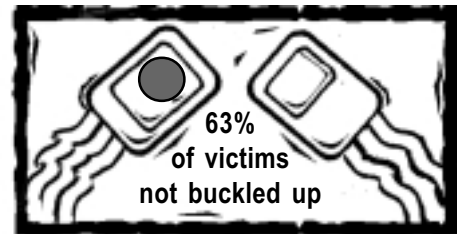
### Number of Virginia Traffic Deaths (16 to 20 year-old age group)



### A Closer Look at Fatal Crashes Involving 18 to 20 year-olds in 2001

- Primary causes of the crashes during 2001 included:
  - driver inexperience
  - driver distraction
  - excessive speed
  - low usage rate of safety belts
  - use of alcohol

- 57 of the 90 victims (63 percent) were not wearing safety belts.



- Of last year's 90 fatalities:
  - 57 (63 percent) were involved in run off the road crashes
  - one (one percent) drifted into the path of oncoming traffic
  - four (four percent) failed to yield right of way
  - 31 (34 percent) were alcohol-related
- Of the 90 fatalities, 62 (69 percent) were drivers, 26 (29 percent) were passengers and two (two percent) were pedestrians.
- Run-off-the-road crashes typically occur when the vehicle drifts and two or all four wheels drop off the road onto the shoulder. A drop of just two inches can cause the driver to lose control. But, the speed of travel, condition of the tires, and condition of the road shoulder can also cause loss of control. If the driver panics and over-corrects to return the vehicle to the pavement or locks the brakes, the vehicle either slingshots across the road or skids into a fixed object and begins to roll.



# ***Nine basic actions can minimize the number of crashes***

Inexperienced, as well as experienced drivers, can prevent crashes by avoiding distractions and maintaining control of their vehicles. The following basics will help drivers with all levels of experience perform safely behind the wheel. But before you do anything - buckle-up. And, be sure all of your passengers are buckled up.

## **1** ***Keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel!***



Driver distraction is reaching epidemic proportions in drivers of all ages, but especially in young, inexperienced drivers. Consider all the things in a vehicle that can occupy a driver's attention: cell phones, radios and CD players, sophisticated vehicle controls, fast food, other conveniences such as laptop computers and onboard navigation devices, not to mention passengers, children and pets.

In today's communities, more people spend more time in vehicles and on the road. Thus, they often try to maximize driving time by combining it with other activities, often with tragic consequences. Driving is not a multi-functional task. It requires the driver's full attention.

## **2** ***Set or adjust the controls on the vehicle and other devices as soon as you get in the car.***

Fasten your safety belt and adjust your mirrors, the radio or CD player, and the climate control settings. Make sure everyone else in your vehicle is buckled up and that all objects are securely stowed.

## **3** ***Keep your body alert.***

Sit straight, but relaxed. Place your left hand at the 8 o'clock position on the steering wheel and your right hand at the 4 o'clock positions on the wheel. Hold the wheel with your fingers and thumbs. Avoid gripping it tightly because your palms are not as sensitive as your fingers. Look in the direction that you want to go.



## **4** ***Avoid using a cell or wireless telephone.***

If you must use the phone:

- Make sure it's easy to reach and that you know how to operate it.
- Use a hands-free microphone when talking on the phone in the car.
- Use speed dial for frequently called numbers.
- Completely exit the roadway and pull into a parking space if you need to take notes, manually dial a number or if the conversation becomes emotional.
- If it's inconvenient to answer the phone, let your wireless network pick up the call or simply ignore it.

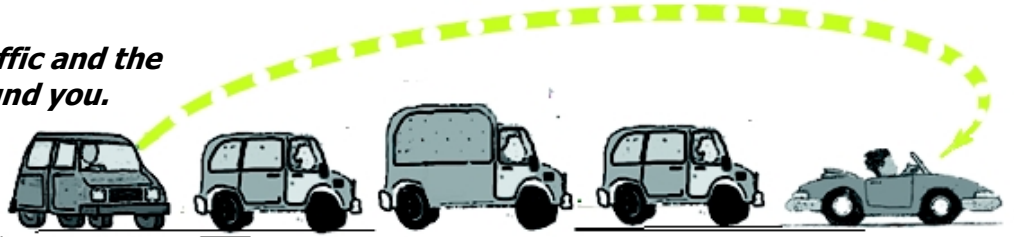
# 5

## ***Anticipate the traffic and the environment around you.***

- Maintain space around your car.

Use the three second rule to keep space between you and the vehicle ahead.

- Don't cut in front of other vehicles.
- Don't drive parallel with another vehicle. If something blocks your path ahead, you'll need the room on either side of your vehicle to escape the obstacle in front of you.
- If someone tailgates you, move into another lane and let the tailgater pass. Or, pull off the road so the person can pass. Avoid speeding up or slowing down.
- As you drive, look four or five vehicles ahead. This helps you anticipate stops, slowdowns, curves or other changes in the traffic or roadway.
- Check your rearview mirrors approximately every ten seconds. This helps you anticipate hazards approaching from behind.



# 8

## ***Maintain the speed limit.***

Speeding will not get you to your destination faster. Speed influences a crash in four ways:

- It increases the distance your vehicle travels from the time you recognize an emergency until you can react.
- It increases the distance it takes to stop your vehicle. The faster you go, the more distance it takes to stop your vehicle.



# 6

## ***Know the type of braking system that your vehicle uses.***

- If your vehicle uses an anti-locking braking system (ABS), keep your foot firmly on the pedal if you stop suddenly. Do not pump the brakes in an emergency situation. This will provide false information to your braking system, preventing it from operating correctly.
- If your vehicle is not equipped with anti-lock brakes, press the brake pedal firmly, just short of locking the wheels. If your wheels lock, indicating a skid, let up slightly on the brake pressure. Then, reapply pressure to the brake. Continue this squeezing action until the vehicle stops.

- Crash severity increases incrementally with speed. For example, if your speed increases from 40 to 60 miles an hour, your speed increases 50 percent while the energy released in a crash more than doubles.
- Higher speeds reduce the ability of vehicles, safety belts, air bags, guardrails and barriers to protect vehicle occupants in a crash.

# 7

## ***Reduce your speed and increase your following distance.***

Slow down in bad weather or other poor driving conditions, such as rain, fog, snow, ice, and heavy traffic. If you are uncomfortable with the speed limit, for whatever reason, slow down.



# 9

## ***Avoid sudden moves or over-correction.***

A sudden response or over-correction, such as jerking the steering wheel to the right or left, or slamming on the brakes can cause the vehicle to skid, swerve into oncoming traffic or veer off the roadway. You can avoid sudden surprises that lead to reactive moves by watching the traffic and roadway ahead, behind and around you.



# Driving Laws for Virginia's Teens

*Your driver's license gives you a lot of freedom. But, it also brings new responsibilities. Here's a summary of some of your responsibilities.*

**1** You must be a resident of the Commonwealth and at least 16 years and three months of age to obtain a driver's license. You may apply for a learner's permit when you turn 15 years and six months of age. Without exception, if you are under age 19, you must hold the learner's permit for at least nine months or until you turn 19 (whichever comes first) before you can receive your driver's license. In addition, until you reach age 19, you must provide proof of successful completion of a state-approved driver's education course which includes both classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction.

**2** In order to get your learner's permit, you will need to pass a two-part knowledge exam and a vision screening at DMV. Contact your nearest DMV customer service center for a driver's manual and be sure to study it before you take the exam. You may also download a driver's manual at [www.dmvnow.com](http://www.dmvnow.com). If you are under 18 and you fail the test, you must wait 15 days before you can take it again.

**3** Your learner's permit allows you to operate a motor vehicle when a licensed driver at least 21 years of age is seated beside you. Or, if the person accompanying you is your legal guardian, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother or step-sister, he or she must be at least 18 years of age.

The driver accompanying you must hold a valid driver's license, be legally permitted to drive and be alert and able to assist you. They can not be under the influence of alcohol or have a suspended license. If you learn to drive with an experienced and safe driver, you'll learn more and be better prepared for the challenges of safe driving.

**4** Curfew laws prohibit drivers under age 18 who hold a learner's permit or driver's license from driving from midnight to 4 a.m. If you hold a driver's license you may drive during

these hours in case of an emergency, when traveling to and from work or a school-sponsored event or when accompanied by a parent or other adult acting in place of a parent.

Also, you are restricted to the number of passengers under age 18 which may travel with you when you drive (one passenger if you are age 16; three passengers if you are age 17). If you hold a learner's permit you may carry only one passenger under age 18. Passenger restrictions do not apply to family members.

**5** If you are convicted of a demerit-point traffic violation committed when you were under age 18, you will be required to satisfactorily complete a driver improvement clinic. No safe driving points will be awarded for attending the clinic. If you do not satisfactorily complete the clinic within 90 days, DMV will suspend your permit or license until the clinic is completed. After your second demerit point conviction, DMV will suspend your permit or license for 90 days.

After a third demerit point conviction, DMV will revoke your permit or license for one year or until you reach age 18, whichever is longer.

You will be required to attend a driver improvement clinic for safety belt and child restraint violations as well as demerit point convictions.

**If you are 18 or 19**, you will be required to complete a driver improvement clinic after your first demerit point conviction (including safety belt and child restraint violations).

**If you are age 18 or older** and you accumulate eight demerit points in 12 months (or 12 points in 24 months), you will receive an advisory letter that cautions you about the consequences of violating the law.

If you accumulate 12 demerit points in 12 months (or 18 points in 24 months), you will be required to complete a clinic requirement. You must enroll in and satisfactorily complete the driver improvement clinic within 90 days.

If you accumulate 18 demerit points in 12 months (or 24 points in 24 months), your driving privilege will be suspended

for 90 days. Additionally, you must complete a driver improvement clinic before your privilege will be restored. Once your privilege is restored, you will be placed on a six-month probation.

**If you are under age 20**, a computer-based driver improvement clinic will not satisfy a driver improvement requirement. You must satisfactorily complete a clinic that provides classroom instruction.

**6** Your parents, custodial parent or guardian have responsibilities, too. If you are under age 18, they must give permission for you to obtain a driver's license and certify that you received at least 40 hours of driving practice (10 hours completed after sunset) before you receive a license. They can also take your license for any amount of time or direct DMV to cancel your license for a six month period. Talk to your parents or guardian about what they expect from you as a new driver in the family.

**7** A juvenile court judge can suspend your license for any number of reasons, including truancy, alcohol or drug-related offenses, delinquency and curfew violations. Keep your record clean and you'll stay on the road.

**8** Visit DMV's web site for more information about learner's permits and becoming a licensed driver in Virginia. **[www.dmvnow.com](http://www.dmvnow.com)**.



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Visit our web site at [www.dmvnow.com](http://www.dmvnow.com)

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